



BOROUGH OF WORTHING.

INTERIM REPORT ON THE PUBLIC HEALTH
SERVICES

FOR THE YEAR 1939

- by -

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Public Health Department,
Town Hall,
WORTHING.

TO: September, 1940.

HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR, ALDERMEN AND COUNCILLORS
- of -
THE BOROUGH OF WORTHING.

Mr. Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Ministry of Health in Circular 2067 have intimated that owing to the greatly increased pressure of work on Health Departments, and in the interests of paper economy only interim reports should be prepared by Medical Officers of Health for the year 1939.

These reports are to be confined to urgent and essential matters affecting the Public Health during the year.

Statistics, when they come to hand, are to be preserved for future reference.

The outbreak of war overshadowed all events during 1939. From the 1st September up to the end of the year Air Raid Precautions and evacuation problems occupied most of the time of the whole department, but nevertheless, the essential services were well maintained.

I do not propose to describe the Air Raids Precautions work that has been undertaken during the year, although it was of an emergency nature, indeed if such were attempted the main objects of this interim report, would be cancelled out. This Air Raids Precautions scheme has called for long hours of arduous work on the part of all the permanent staff, accentuated in the Health Department by the death of the Chief Clerk and the calling up to the services of the whole of the remainder of the clerical staff.

In the early days of September over 10,000 people were evacuated to the Borough, of this total 5,500 were school children with whom I have dealt already in my school report.

The remainder were mainly mothers with young children, expectant mothers, with or without young children and blind persons.

With such a sudden influx and under such conditions we were bound to be presented with numerous problems of an urgent nature.

One of the most urgent problems that was likely to arise was a sudden increase in the incidence of infectious diseases. This was of particular importance to us in Worthing for not only are we responsible for our own population which had increased by such substantial figures, but we also have obligations to several surrounding districts whose populations had increased in a like manner to our own.

Arrangements were made for increasing the number of beds in the Isolation Hospital, but this increase was limited to that which was possible in the buildings already erected.

By re-adjusting and adding to the number of beds in the existing pavilions and by increasing the length of and making certain structural alterations to the wooden block that was previously used for the maids' sleeping quarters, it was possible to add 26 beds and 2 cots to the existing accommodation.

The incidence of infectious disease began to rise as soon as the evacuation began, as was expected, but I am glad to be able to say that at no time was it so great that the accommodation at Swandean was unable to cope with it, indeed on the other hand, the accommodation was never unduly strained.

I pointed out to your Public Health Committee early in the year the advisability of taking steps to immunise the susceptible population against diphtheria, and this particularly

in view of the necessary increase in this susceptible population due to the evacuation, should it take place.

By the end of the year over 2,000, or approximately one third of the estimated susceptible children had been successfully inoculated. This work will be continued during 1940.

The problem of the misfits in the evacuation scheme was acute in the early stages. A large number of the most troublesome cases soon began to return home, but many billeting adjustments and special actions were required for those who remained.

A special cleansing station and combined hostel and sick bay had to be established to deal with certain of the cases, such cases, however, being found mainly among the school children, and children of pre-school age. The members of the Council will have seen my Annual School Report already, in which I dealt with most of these matters at some length.

Additional Ante-natal and Child Welfare Clinics had to be established to serve the evacuated expectant mothers and young children and additional medical assistance obtained.

No additions were made to the number of Health Visitors employed, so that a large increase in work was thrown on the existing staff, and in the early stages when the numbers were very great, the fulltime school nurse undertook certain of the visiting duties.

Routine visiting was suspended for some weeks, the Nurses time being fully occupied with emergency visiting and the additional clinic work. By the end of the year such a large number of the Mothers and young children had returned home that the work was very considerably eased.

The additional beds made available by the County Council as Authority under the Midwives Act, proved sufficient for dealing with the expectant mothers who gave birth to their

children in the Borough. It appeared at one time that this provision of beds was going to be a difficult problem, but after the first few weeks the demand was reduced substantially by the return home of certain of the women before their expected time of delivery.

Although the increased population put a strain on much of the housing accommodation, we were able to keep the crowding within legal if not within hygienic limits.

An increased load was put on the sewage tanks, and it was found necessary to increase the chlorine content to keep down the smell.

The Chief Sanitary Inspector has submitted his report on the work carried out by him and the additional Inspectors.

In spite of the handicap of Air Raid Precautions and short, inexperienced clerical staff the volume of work carried out by the Sanitary Inspectors was extremely good.

As you are aware the Chief Sanitary Inspector was responsible for the organisation and operation of the Rescue and Decontamination squads, and under his guidance and training a highly efficient service has resulted.

An increase in the routine work was caused by the operation of the Food and Drugs Act, which came into force on 1st October. Heretofore this work has been carried out by the West Sussex County Council.

As usual a very large number of visits and inspections were carried out and complaints investigated, all of which are duly recorded for future reference if necessary.

I am,

Yours obediently,

H.J. PHILLIPS, M.D.,

Medical Officer of Health.

